



Annual Report

FY 2000-2001

As required by section 445, Florida Statutes

WWW.WORKFORCEFLORIDA.COM

Dear Workforce Partners:

The events of September 11, 2001, have demonstrated the wisdom of lawmakers and citizen volunteers in creating Florida's new workforce system. Legislators and governors, frustrated with a social welfare system approach to employment problems, decided to take a new course. For too long, the employment system seemed better prepared to study and bemoan the problems of underemployment and unemployment than it was to solve such problems. Building upon the experiments of the State WAGES (Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency) Board and the Workforce Development Board of Enterprise Florida, Workforce Florida in its inaugural year has taken a new direction.



Workforce Florida and its administrative arm, The Agency for Workforce Innovation, were created to see if a social-welfare centered system could be reoriented by a business lead, business-driven board and become a catalyst of the economic development system. Workforce Florida was created as a change agent. At the first board of directors' meeting, a Chairman's Challenge was issued to each of the newly created Councils, to see if a system, notoriously bureaucratic and slow, could become a flexible and responsive tool to assist in economic growth. The system responded and it demonstrated that training could take place at a more rapid pace than normal, that all learning did not have to occur in semesters, and that competitive processes would allow both public and private providers to assist in the building of a stronger economy.

As the Board contemplated the needs of business and the changes needed in the system, little focus was placed on what became an economic shock after the September 11th attack. The month immediately after the attack produced the largest number of filings for unemployment compensation in the history of the state. More than 80,000 people came looking for temporary assistance and thousands more turned to the system looking to replace lost jobs. It has been a pleasure to see that in such a situation the preparations made for prosperity serve us well in times of economic concern. The educational system has become a great partner through Operation Paycheck. This program includes the innovative concept of "credit for life-experience" as part of the training and has been a creative and quick solution to the problems of many who were affected by the tragedy.

While the experiment in workforce development lead by Workforce Florida has had its critics, few would have anticipated how well prepared the system was for the economic downturn. Even as the business leaders that sit on the Workforce Florida Board of Directors are impatient for greater change and efficiency, it is a blessing to the state that the changes in Florida's workforce system were already in progress. This annual report only gives a glimpse of what the workforce system has become. In future years we hope to highlight the great leaps of progress that have taken place by regional workforce boards and other workforce partners. But for today, we are fortunate for the progress that the business leaders have enabled as they have guided and directed this program.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Toni Jennings".

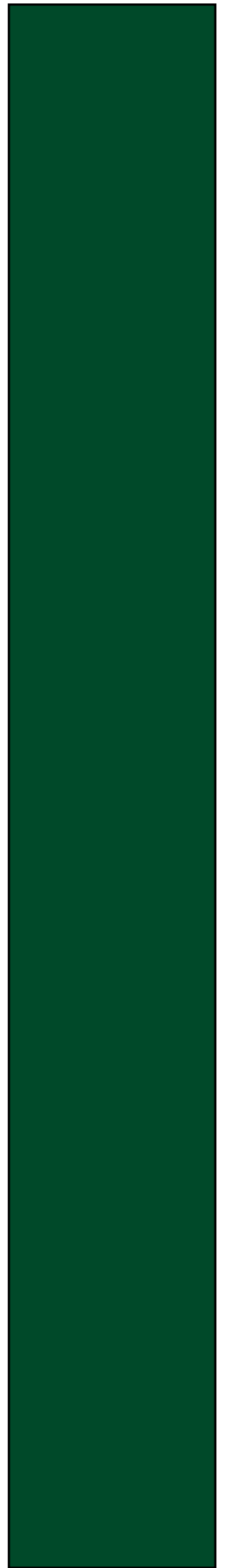
Toni Jennings, Chairman

Workforce Florida Board of Directors

Table of Contents

II.	Executive Summary	2
III.	First Year At A Glance	5
IV.	Workforce Force System Overview	9
V.	Workforce Florida Councils	14
	High Skills/High Wages	15
	Better Jobs/Better Wages	17
	First Jobs/First Wages	19
VI.	Workforce Florida Business Services	21
	Incumbent Worker Training	22
	Quick Response Training	24
VII.	Workforce Florida Services	25
	One-Stop Career Centers	26
	Workforce Marketing	28
VIII.	Workforce Florida Performance Measures	30
	State Performance Measures	31
	WIA Federal Performance Standards	32
IX	Appendices	33
	Map of Regional Workforce Boards	34
	Regional Leadership	35
	Red and Green Performance Report	40
	Appendices Available	
	Federal WIA Report	
	Flash Report on Welfare Transition	
	3-Tier Performance Report	

Workforce Florida Executive Summary



Workforce Florida - A New Way of Doing Business

Executive Summary

Streamlining the System

In the first year of operation, Workforce Florida was charged by Chairman Toni Jennings with creating a new way of doing business for the workforce system. This new approach required four major changes:

- 1) Business was recognized as the principal customer of the workforce system;
- 2) Resources were to be redirected to programs and services, primarily at the local level;
- 3) The workforce system had to be performance driven, with the state board responsible for performance measurement; and
- 4) All elements of the system would be held to greater accountability through performance contracting.

This annual report highlights how Workforce Florida and its workforce partners have addressed these challenges within the first year of operation.

In addition to asking the system to change how business was done, the chairman issued a challenge to the newly created councils to demonstrate that concerted effort on specific goals could transform the workforce system into a more flexible and useful tool of public policy. The Chairman's Challenge included:

Serving the Needs of Business

The new customer of the workforce system is Florida businesses. To be successful at serving the new workforce customer the system had to involve business leaders at all levels of the system. The first requirement was that all local and state workforce boards be comprised of business leaders. These business led regional boards determine the public/private partnerships and initiatives that are implemented locally.

Workforce Florida greatly expanded the program to train workers already employed to prevent future layoffs. The program, known as the Incumbent Worker Training Program, prepared 6,285 employees, more than three times the number trained the previous year, at the cost of \$401 per person. Each dollar of state funds was matched by more than nine dollars of private sector investment. Employees from 115 companies received training in addition to employees from 33 companies in the plastics industry. This training program, part of the new way of doing business, attempts to stop lay offs before they occur. Several of the local workforce boards followed the example and have sought to aggressively upgrade the skills of those currently employed and at risk.

Florida also attempted to redirect the customer focus to business by partnering with The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc. to train 230 workers from 33 companies located across 12 Florida counties, in both urban and rural areas. Of those enrolled in the training, 210 passed the National Certification in Plastics exam, thereby receiving a nationally recognized, portable credential as either an injection molding or extrusion operator. This grant strengthened the entire industry, and made Florida more

Executive Summary

(continued from page 2)

competitive for plastic manufacturers, securing the future of many more jobs.

These innovations built upon an existing strong foundation of business services. More than 35,000 employers hired 248,103 new employees using the workforce system. This is an increase of 30,000 employees over the previous year. Nearly 30% of the 836,611 individuals that registered for employment with the local one-stops or on-line obtained a job.

Redirecting More Funds to Programs

In one of the early moves to create a new way of doing business, Workforce Florida reduced administrative service cost by 38.76 percent. These savings came from consolidating the functions previously performed by the Workforce Development Board under Enterprise Florida and the Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) Board. Funds were redirected from administrative services to the regional workforce boards. As a result these funds were used to offer programs and services to Florida businesses and job seekers. This redirection of funds resulted in training opportunities for 493 additional Floridians (assuming a training cost of \$3,000 per person).

The new system also transferred many of the functions of the Department of Labor and Employment Security to a smaller Agency for Workforce Innovation, which also assumed fiscal and contracting responsibility for welfare transition from the Department of Management Services. More than 749 positions were eliminated and more than \$46 million was shifted to local control for direct services.

Accountability

With the workforce system allowing regions the flexibility to deliver customized programs that best meet the needs of their local businesses, the state board had to devise an avenue to hold these programs accountable and to ensure that the highest level of performance was being achieved. The performance measures instituted by Florida are more stringent than the federally required performance measures.

To track results, Florida developed the Red/Green Report to evaluate short term performance and the 3-Tier report to evaluate long-term performance. The Red/Green Report is a comparative report on the performance of all the regional boards. The report compares the regions with each other on categories such as employment rates, wage rates, welfare return rate, customer service and others. Green blocks on the report represent regions that are in the top 25 percentile and the red blocks represent the bottom 25 percentile.

The Red/Green report was used to give performance



Performance Award given to the six highest performing regions for the 2000-2001 program year

Executive Summary

(continued from page 3)

incentive awards to those regions consistently performing in the top quartile and to alert the Board of Directors when a region continually performs in the bottom quartile. If a region continues to have poor performance, the state board will offer technical assistance. After technical assistance has been provided and the region continues to perform poorly, the region can face sanctions, including the loss of funding and ultimately the removal of the board's charter.

Regions receiving performance awards for the 2000-2001 program year due to top quartile performance were: Region 1 (Escambia and Santa Rosa counties); Region 3 (Calhoun, Jackson, Holmes, Liberty and Washington counties); Region 4 (Bay, Gulf and Franklin counties); Region 13 (Brevard county); Region 15 (Hillsborough county); and Region 17 (Polk county).

To gauge long-term success of workforce programs, the 3-Tier report is used. The report looks at where participants in workforce programs are after a specific period of time. The report will show if the individual has remained employed and if the individual still is in the educational system or accessing other government services. The 3-Tier numbers also evaluate workforce programs on a program by program basis, at a council level (High Skills/High Wages, Better Jobs/Better Wages, or First Jobs/First Wages) or as part of all the state activities for a specified period of time.

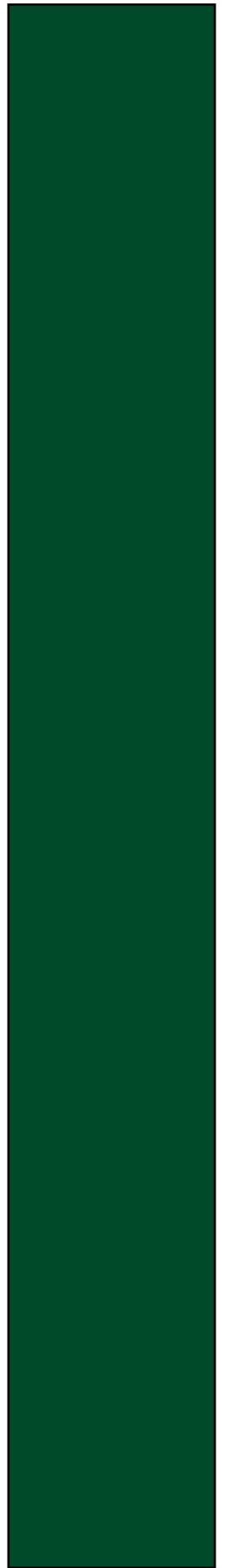
Performance-Based Contracts

Regional Contracts: The workforce development system uses a charter-process with the regional boards aimed at encouraging local design and control of service delivery. Workforce Florida is responsible for granting charters to regional workforce boards and ultimately to remove charters if performance, fiscal accountability and other factors fall below accepted standards.

In addition to the charters, each regional board is under a performance-based contract with the Agency for Workforce Innovation. These contracts identify performance levels, fiscal strategies, and other elements that each board must maintain to be in contract compliance. In addition, each regional board is required to have performance-based contracts with all vendors, educational institutions, or other agencies with which they contract with to provide workforce services at the local level. Performance contracts are required as they tie payment, incentives and contract continuation to agreed upon performance levels.

Agency for Workforce Innovation Contract: In a first-of-its-kind move for Florida, the new workforce system created a structure where the state agency is accountable to a private organization. The Agency for Workforce Innovation has a performance contract with Workforce Florida, Inc., stipulating performance levels that must be maintained, reporting requirements, and other functions the Agency must be complete to be in compliance.

Workforce Florida The First Year at a Glance



Workforce Florida's First Year

As Florida positions itself to be an economic and high technology leader, the skills of Florida's workforce need to be aligned with jobs this type of economy will create. That is why Workforce Florida is committed to creating a globally competitive workforce. This annual report highlights Workforce Florida's first year and the many accomplishments that have laid the foundation for the quality workforce needed in the 21st century.

Florida's Workforce System - How Did We Get Here?

To understand the workforce system today, a perspective of where the system has been is needed. Here is a brief history of Florida's workforce system and events leading up to the integrated system now in place:

Before July 1996

Regional private industry councils (PICs) existed in Florida. The federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) established the councils to oversee spending of federal job training funds. There was minimal state law governing job training and other workforce programs.

July 1996

The state Workforce Florida Act replaced private industry councils with regional workforce development boards and realigned regions to match community college districts. The Legislature also passed the Work & Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) Act to implement welfare reform. While two separate governing boards existed at the state level, the law allowed regional workforce boards to also function as WAGES coalitions overseeing welfare reform at the local level.

July 1998

The Legislature took all WAGES responsibilities from the Department of Labor and transferred them to local boards, which were already contracting for case management and support services for welfare recipients in their areas. WAGES contracting and fiscal management was transferred to the Department of Management Services.

August 1998

The federal Workforce Investment Act was signed into law replacing the Job Training Partnership Act and consolidated about 14 different funding streams under the One Stop System, which was governed by local workforce boards. Florida was one of six states approved as an early implementing state, beginning July 1999.

October 1999

Senate President Toni Jennings announced the creation of a Senate Select Committee on Workforce Innovation to consolidate workforce and welfare reform programs into a single point of accountability. The committee's report became the foundation for the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000.

Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 - Creating A New Way of Doing Business

The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 was designed to streamline the workforce system. At the state level, Workforce Florida was created as a separate not-for-profit corporation replacing the Workforce Development Board of Enterprise Florida, Inc. and the WAGES Board. Regional boards were also consolidated. Senate President Toni Jennings was named chairman of the new Workforce Florida Board of Directors and Curtis Austin was named president of Workforce Florida, Inc. The

Workforce Board was comprised of business leaders from around the state who would set policy that would align workforce initiatives with needs of new and existing Florida businesses. Workforce Florida was empowered to guide the new workforce system.

The law transferred many of the functions of the Department of Labor to a smaller Agency for Workforce Innovation, which also assumed fiscal and contracting responsibility for Welfare Transition Services (formally WAGES) from the Department of Management Services. Tom McGurk was appointed to lead the new agency.

Chairman's Challenge

At the inaugural meeting of Workforce Florida's Board of Directors, Chairman Toni Jennings charged the new board with devising strategies to train 3,000 workers for higher skill, higher pay jobs within the next six months to demonstrate that this new system could create the workforce needed to sustain a 21st century economy. Specific assignments to the Board's three councils were as follows:

High Skills/High Wages

- 1 Present a plan to rapidly train 1,000 Information Technology professionals.
- 2 Develop a list of tasks and responsibilities for the local committees that would assist in redesigning the workforce system.

Better Jobs/Better Wages

- 1 Present a plan to rapidly train 1,000 former cash assistance recipients who are employed for advancement that will allow them to be self-sufficient.
- 2 Develop a plan to use idle resources to significantly move Florida in the preparation of the skills and capabilities of those who can be served by these significant resources.

First Jobs/First Wages

- 1 Identify opportunities to place 1,000 Florida youth in unsubsidized after school jobs.
- 2 Convene a Florida Youth Summit to develop a strategy for youth programs and ensure that our programs integrate with those ongoing efforts of the Department of Education and Department of Juvenile Justice, to meet this performance measure.

Measuring Success

In its first year of operation, Workforce Florida has made significant gains in creating the quality workforce needed by existing and new Florida businesses. This Annual Report highlights how Workforce Florida, during the 2000 – 2001 program year (July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001), constructed a new way of doing business while at the same time training individuals with skills necessary to fill high tech jobs, forging relationships with businesses and the economic development community, and creating a true One-Stop approach to job seekers and business leaders alike.

In addition to successes in achieving strategic goals, Workforce Florida has also positioned itself as a national frontrunner in workforce development reform. In a report just released in September 2001, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) reported that Florida exceeded all of its federal performance measures under the Workforce Investment Act. Florida has also implemented more stringent performance standards at the state and regional level. These state and federal performance measures allow for accountability within the system to ensure that not only is a quality workforce being developed within our state, but that the system is accountable to the tax payers.

Workforce Florida looks forward to building upon the strong foundation laid in the first year.

Workforce Florida: The First Year At A Glance

July 2000

- ♦ Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 becomes law.
- ♦ Members of the Workforce Florida Board of Directors appointed by the Governor.
- ♦ Senate President Toni Jennings appointed Chairman of the Workforce Florida Board of Directors.

August 2000

- ♦ Workforce Florida Board holds first meeting.
- ♦ By-Laws for Workforce Florida Board of Directors approved.
- ♦ Members of Executive Committee appointed.
- ♦ Members of the three councils appointed with the following to serve as council chairs:

High Skills/High Wages:	Ray Gilley
Better Jobs/Better Wages:	Carolyn Franz
First Jobs/First Wages:	Cathy Martin
- ♦ Chairman issues challenge to 3 councils.

October 2000

- ♦ Agency for Workforce Innovation opens for business.

November 2000

- ♦ Approval of design for the new IT system, known as OSMIS, which will consolidate workforce activities into one IT system and provide a job matching system for job seekers and businesses.
- ♦ Performance measures were approved.
- ♦ Incentive payments for high performing regions approved by Board.

January 2000

- ♦ Strategic plan which includes the vision, mission and guiding principals for the new workforce system is adopted by the Workforce Florida Board of Directors.

March 2000

- ♦ Councils exceed Challenge issued by Chairman Jennings
- ♦ Workforce Florida Board of Directors begins discussion on a new regional funding formula for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

May 2000

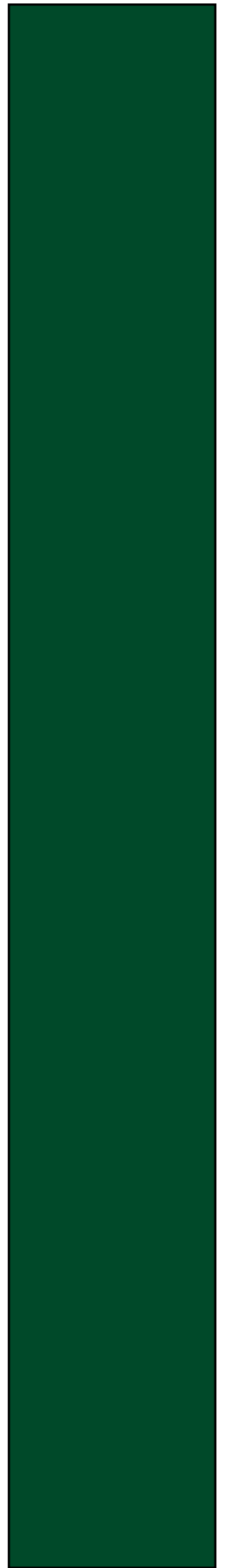
- ♦ Workforce Florida Board approves new TANF funding formula for regional allocation.
- ♦ Workforce and AWI staff directed to begin researching One-Stop Credentialing Committee and make recommendation to committee on services, appearance, technology level and other elements each One-Stop Career Center must offer.

June 2000

- ♦ Workforce Policy Summit was held to bring regional and state level workforce development professionals for an intensive three-day educational event.

The Workforce System

An Overview



The Workforce System

In July 2000, Florida enacted landmark legislation, the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000, which consolidated a variety of state workforce programs, including Florida's highly acclaimed welfare transition program known as WAGES, under a single umbrella. This consolidation is designed to better serve employers and job seekers at all levels, from youth entering the workforce for the first time to workers needing specialized skills to fill coveted jobs in Florida's fast-growing technology sectors.

A key aim of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 is aligning workforce development efforts with state economic development strategies to develop the workers Florida needs to attract and grow job-creating businesses. The new integrated workforce system will help ensure that businesses can hire work-ready employees – and that the working poor have the opportunity to upgrade their skills and obtain jobs that allow them to become self-sufficient.

Florida businesses cite workforce issues as their single most important concern, according to surveys by the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the state chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business. That concern is consistent with national studies highlighting the difficulties of finding and keeping qualified workers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1996 to 2006 the need for employees across the United States will increase by 14 percent, but the population of workforce age Americans will increase only 10 percent.

The challenge is magnified in Florida, which continues to be a leader in new job growth, creating one of every 13 new jobs in the nation. Additionally, the growing prominence of the technology sector increases the need to produce skilled workers. According to the American Electronics Association, the state created 57,300 high-tech jobs between 1994 and 2000, placing it fifth nationally in high-tech employment growth. Demand for systems analysts and computer engineers, among the fastest-growing occupations, continues to outstrip the supply of available workers.

Florida also is ranked among the top 10 states in the nation in growth of new companies and diversity of businesses, according to the 2000 Development Report Card issued by the Corporation for Enterprise Development. However, the same study ranked Florida among the bottom 30 states in such areas as basic educational proficiency in reading and math, high school graduation rates and college attainment.



While all One-Stop Career Centres provide numerous services and programs for businesses located in their area, some One-Stops have designated rooms or locations whose function is to provide business services and job seekers are serviced at other locations. Pictured is a Business Service Center located in Miami, Florida.

Workforce System

(continued from page 9)

Workforce Innovation Act of 2000

The Workforce Innovation Act provides for a business- led board, Workforce Florida, Inc., to establish policy for and to evaluate the performance of the state workforce system. This private sector board, unlike other boards that serve to set state policy. It actually state agency, the Agency for Acting as a translator of policy AWI implements policy set by performance-based contracts The contracts are structured to delivery of community Stop Service centers – while dollars they receive generate local boards have the ability to region, if they out perform

“The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 established a private sector board that was authorized to set state policy and allowed each of the 24 regions local innovation and flexibility while ensuring federal and state dollars generate results.”

Toni Jennings, Chairman
Workforce Florida Board

in an advisory capacity, is authorized gives direction to the newly created Workforce Innovation (AWI). as well as an administering agency, the state board into action through with each of the 24 regional boards. allow for local innovation and identified services through the One- ensuring that federal and state results. This means that each of the bring additional resources to the other regions in the state.

The Workforce Board has welfare reform, workforce compensation programs, million in federal TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), \$825 million in UC Benefits (Unemployment Compensation) and \$120 million in WIA (Workforce Investment Act). These funds are directed to the local boards through their performance contracts to provide services that compliment and leverage other local priorities. For example, it is expected that vocational or employment training would focus on those industries critical in the local area or industries that economic developers are attempting to attract to the area.

authority over \$1.3 billion in development, and unemployment including approximately \$174

Structure:

Workforce Florida, Inc

To overcome fragmented policy and decision making, Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) was created as an independent, not-for-profit, public/private partnership to serve as the state’s principal workforce policy organization. Workforce Florida is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Governor, that must include a majority of business community representatives.

Agency for Workforce Innovation

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) is the state agency responsible for implementing policy and programs approved by the Workforce Florida Board and for ensuring that workforce funds and programs are appropriately administered. AWI operates under a performance-based contract with WFI to carry out board policy and for the delivery of the workforce system programs and services.

Regional Workforce Boards

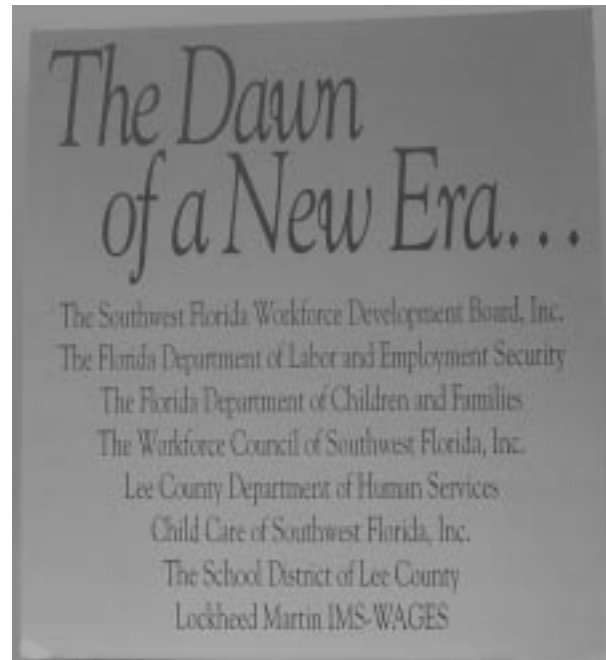
There was broadening consensus in Washington and Tallahassee during the 1990s that local control and flexibility in service delivery produces better results. Community-managed programs can create better-tailored and more innovative solutions to local problems than “broad brush” solutions from state government. The 24 regional workforce boards were created as the platform for building a world-class workforce for the new economy.

The local boards are business-led “boards of directors” for the local area. They focus on strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the local system, choosing local managers to direct the operational details of their One-Stop Career Centers.

One-Stop Career Centers

Florida’s One-Stop Career Center system was established to bring workforce and welfare transition programs together under one physical or “virtual” roof to simplify and improve access for employers seeking qualified workers or training programs for their existing employees and job seekers.

Recent federal and state workforce legislation has emphasized the importance of serving the business customer, and made the system more accountable as a whole by tying performance funding to customer satisfaction. Florida’s One-Stop Career Center system is a key resource for businesses seeking training grants for customized training for existing employees or finding qualified entry-level workers. To further assist businesses, several regions have established dedicated employer One-Stop Career Centers in business districts to help local employers recruit, train and retain workers.



The new workforce system offers businesses and individuals access to many services at one location. Pictured is the sign from Ft. Myers

One-Stop Career Centers are the “front door” for Floridians seeking unemployment, temporary cash assistance, job placement, workforce education and training, and workforce support services such as childcare. The federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 mandates participation by nearly a dozen agencies that determine eligibility for and provide:

- ◆ Adult job placement and training
- ◆ Unemployment insurance
- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation services
- ◆ Transitional services to assist job seekers move from welfare to work
- ◆ Veterans Employment and Training.

Today, there are nearly 200 One-Stop Career centers across Florida managed at the local level by regional workforce boards. Some are full-service centers providing direct access to a comprehensive array of programs at a single location, while others are satellite facilities capable of providing referrals or electronic access. The goal is to move beyond co-location of programs to full integration to provide seamless service to customers.

Councils

The Workforce Innovation Act of 2000 specified that three councils were to be created at both the state and local levels, each one targeting a specific workforce population. The goal is to improve

Florida's workforce and thus positively impact existing and new Florida businesses through funded initiatives and programs.

High Skills/High Wages

The High Skills/High Wages Council seeks to develop a more skilled workforce by aligning education and training programs with higher-paying, high-demand jobs. This is done by partnering with economic development organizations to enhance the state's efforts to attract, grow and expand job-creating businesses. It is also accomplished by working with chambers of commerce to meet the needs of existing businesses.

Better Jobs/Better Wages

The Better Jobs/Better Wages Council assists families transitioning from welfare to work and former welfare recipients working in low-wage jobs with limited mobility, and the larger population of under-employed adults.

First Jobs/First Wages

The First Jobs/First Wages Council promotes successful entry into the workforce through education and job experience, including school-to-work initiatives that enlist business and community support to ensure that students have the educational and occupational skills required to succeed in the workforce. The council also addresses adults entering the workforce for the first time and youth programs related to welfare reform.

Strategic Plan

The workforce strategic plan, developed in the Fall of 2000 and updated annually, outlines goals and strategies for developing a skilled workforce with key action plans addressing the three workforce initiatives for first jobs, better jobs and high skill occupations. Other action plans target small business needs and help stimulate job creation in rural and distressed urban areas.

Featured in the strategic plan are action plans on workforce marketing, enhancing one-stops career centers, and developing an integrated approach to managing performance, funding and information systems. Detailed supporting data and documentation on performance measures, allocations to workforce regions, and performance based payment structures are included in appendices to this report.

By design, the development of the Strategic Plan was a highly collaborative process with economic development organizations, the Florida Chamber, businesses, and other workforce partners. Issue briefs were developed first by staff with Councils' approval, and then posted on the workforce web site for feedback and comment. These narratives provided the background for developing specific workforce goals and strategies. The Workforce Florida Board of Directors and executive directors of the 24 regional boards, met in January 2001, to critically review and refine goals and strategies. A complete draft of the Strategic Plan was presented to the Board in January 2001, for final approval after reflecting input and improvements. Chairman Jennings appointed a Strategic Planning Committee headed by Dorothy Weaver to spearhead the continued refinement and updates to the plan.

This strategic blueprint is a living document that will be reviewed and refined by the board and its partners to evaluate progress and ensure that workforce strategies are on course and helping to achieve goals. Success will be measured against progress toward specific goals.

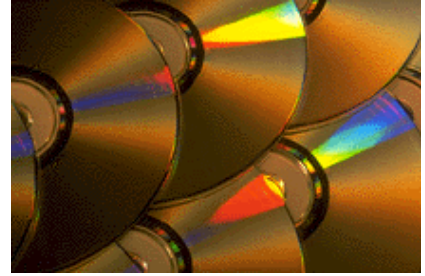
WORKFORCE FLORIDA COUNCILS

HIGH SKILLS/HIGH WAGES
BETTER JOBS/BETTER WAGES
FIRST JOBS/FIRST WAGES

Improving the skills of Florida's workforce

High Skills/High Wages Council

The High Skills/High Wages Council aligns the education and training programs with high-paying, high-demand occupations that advance individuals' careers, build a more skilled workforce, and enhance the state's efforts to attract and expand job-creating businesses.



Major First Year Accomplishments

The Council used its \$3.9 million for the purpose of meeting the challenge issued by Chairman Toni Jennings at the October 2001 Board meeting. The challenge was to rapidly train at least 1,000 information technology professionals by March 1, 2001 (100 days start to finish).

The demand for IT training in Florida is extraordinary. Proposals were received from all 24 Regional Workforce Boards with the total collective demand for training equaling \$15.2 million for training over 5,200 persons. Through a competitive process that emphasized public and private sector leveraging and ability to meet the aggressive time frames, the top 10 proposals were funded. Nearly half of Florida counties (30 of 67) were included in the top 10 Regional Workforce Board areas awarded.

The results of the Chairman's Challenge generated a total of 1,577 Floridians being trained in information technology in 100 days with 1,242 of those individuals receiving industry-recognized certifications. The average cost per trainee was about \$2,502.

The certifications received by IT trainees included Microsoft Office User Specialist, A+, AutoCAD, Microsoft 2000, Cisco Certified Network Administrator, and Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer.

PRIORITIES

The priorities of the High Skills/High Wages Council are:

- ◆ Training existing employees of Florida counties to upgrade skills.
- ◆ Training Floridians for jobs in Targeted Industry Sectors (industries targeted for growth due to positive impact on economy and wage level attached to jobs in industry).
- ◆ Increasing the number of individuals with industry-recognized credentials/degrees at all education levels – High School, Postsecondary Adult Vocational, and University.
- ◆ Training for primary occupations as determined by the labor market.

“We would participate again (in a grant like this). We fully appreciate and support this opportunity. Now that we have four Microsoft Certified Professional (MCPs) employees, we would encourage and support them to continue work towards the MCSE.”

Sharon Andre, Martin
Memorial Hospital,
Port St. Lucie

High Skills/High Wages

(continued from page 13)

- ♦ Working with industry consortiums rather than individual employers.
- ♦ Training in non-traditional modalities.
- ♦ Shifting resources from infrastructure, administration costs, program/curriculum development to training.
- ♦ Servicing businesses through One-Stop Career Centers.

Partners

The High Skills/High Wages Council partners with other organizations that have an interest in improving Florida's workforce to better meet the needs of the state's economy. Partners of the High Skills/High Wages Council includes:

- ♦ Florida Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Enterprise Florida, Inc.
- ♦ Florida Economic Development Council
- ♦ Economic development organizations statewide,
- ♦ Agency for Workforce Innovation,
- ♦ State University System
- ♦ State Community College System
- ♦ Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools & Colleges
- ♦ Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida
- ♦ Public and private training providers

"The A+ training with Family Computer USA has given me a better understanding of what makes computers tick." Mr. Hendricks further praised the flexibility of the short-term training schedule, with training and testing offered during evening and weekend hours.

Charlie Hendricks,
Service Center Technician,
Naples Community Hospital
Naples, Florida



Partnership in Action: Workforce Florida Board members, economic development professionals, and business leaders meet to develop strategies to meet the needs of Florida business. Pictured Mark Reina, SunTrust Banks, Toni Jennings, Chairman WFI Board, Traver Gruen-Kennedy, Citrix Systems, Linda Cooke, WFI Board member, and Ray Gilley, WFI Board member.

Better Jobs/Better Wages

The Better Jobs/Better Wages Council focuses on moving workers from underemployment into training for better skills attainment. Such training should enable those served to get better jobs with better wages that provide economic self-sufficiency. The Council also is responsible for overseeing the state's welfare transition strategies with an expanded emphasis on helping former welfare recipients succeed in the workplace and avoid a return to dependence upon cash assistance from the government. The Council also focuses on moving workers from part-time to full-time work, and embraces the concept of lifelong learning.

Major Accomplishments of First Year

Retention Incentive Training Accounts (RITA)

Chairman Jennings challenged the council to rapidly train 1000 employed former cash assistance recipients to move them towards self-sufficiency. In response, the council provided \$5 million dollars for Retention Incentive Training Accounts (RITAs). After receiving responses from 23 of the 24 regions, 1000 RITAs at \$5000 each were requested. Each of the 23 regions were required to complete a RITA Challenge Plan describing critical elements that needed to be addressed; define the specific process for identifying, enlisting, and enrolling each candidate; and to describe support services, including mentoring, that would be offered. Regions were also required to define partnerships with local employers and education/training providers. Regions provided specific information on each candidate.

“When her son graduated from high school, Lucilla’s friends persuaded her it was time to open a business and sell the special cakes that had been the highlights of family celebrations and charity events for years. Today, SWEET ART BY LUCILLA employs more than 50 workers in two bakeries, South Miami and the Falls area.

After hiring her first welfare transition client over 3 years ago, Lucilla enjoys working with employees who work hard and want to learn whatever it takes to succeed. Elena, an employee and former TANF recipient, is attending school to learn cake decorating, which will give her the opportunity to move up from cashier to full-time baker. Lucilla says, “it is an advantage to me to have someone who can work with customers and also create cakes that I will be proud to sell in my shop. I want my employees to feel like this is their business too.”

Education/training programs included the following:

Office Systems Technology	Emergency Medical Tech
Registered Nurse/LPN	Graphic Design
Computer Programming	Accounting Technology
Dental Assistant/Hygienist	Pharmacy Technology
Culinary Arts	Childhood Development
Tractor/Trailer Operator	Criminal Justice
Auto Mechanics	Paralegal

Part Two - Step-Up Challenge Grants

Chairman Toni Jennings also challenged the council to develop a plan to draw on Welfare-to-Work resources. In response, the council issued Step-Up Challenge Grants using federal Welfare-to-Work (WtW) funds combined with non-federal funds to provide jobs training, skills and job upgrades for the hardest-to-place welfare transition participants and non-custodial parents. Two rounds of solicitations yielded projects totaling nearly \$7 million in funding for innovative projects. The council will continue to monitor performance outcomes during this council year.

Better Jobs/Better Wages

(continued from page 19)

Employer Awareness Grant

Building upon the nationally recognized success of Workforce 2020, a project of Workforce Florida and Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce, the council awarded seven regional workforce boards a total of \$2,900,000 in funds to implement an employer and community awareness campaign. Elements of the grant solicitation included objectives to move TANF eligible recipients to gainful employment, provide a vehicle for employers to address the needs of entry level workers, educate employers on best practices for successful employment and retention programs and identify ways to expand the use of One-Stops by employers. The council will report these efforts next year.



One-Stop Career Centers do much more than post job openings, they help people train to find a better job and gain self-sufficiency. Pictured is a One-Stop in Ft. Myers.

PRIORITIES

- ♦ Providing redirection and intervention instead of welfare.
- ♦ Providing client assessment and guidance services that lead to self-sufficiency.
- ♦ Helping families transition from public assistance to self-reliance to self-sufficiency by identifying and addressing barriers.
- ♦ Increasing employment retention, career advancement, and services leading to sustainable wages.
- ♦ Promoting training and other support services to help underemployed workers achieve better jobs and wages.

Partners

The Better Jobs/Better Wages Council partners with other organizations that have an interest in improving Florida's workforce to better meet the needs of the state's economy, including:

- ♦ Departments of Health
- ♦ Department of Revenue
- ♦ Department of Education
- ♦ Department of Juvenile Justice
- ♦ Department of Children and Family Services
- ♦ Agency for Workforce Innovation
- ♦ Economic development organizations statewide
- ♦ Commission on Responsible Fatherhood
- ♦ Take Stock in Children
- ♦ Public and private training providers
- ♦ Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Workforce 2020
- ♦ Ounce of Prevention
- ♦ Partnership for School Readiness

First Jobs/First Wages Council

The First Jobs/First Wages Council was charged by statute to: "...develop strategies ... which promote the successful entry of individuals, including young people and adults working for the first time, into the workforce." Implicit in this task is forging partnerships with other stakeholders to align state policies to insure that all the needs of the first time worker are met to increase the chances of successful entry into the workforce.

Major First Year Accomplishments:

Response to the Chairman's Challenge

The First Jobs/First Wages Council was challenged by Chairman Jennings to place 1,000 Florida youth in unsubsidized after-school-jobs (rather than in government subsidized employment) within 120 days. The council responded by challenging regional workforce boards to design and implement creative and innovative strategies to identify, counsel, and place young people in jobs. In addition, the Council required regional boards to make contacts with employers to market the young people as well as services they could provide employers and to identify future opportunities for employment of young people.

The regions were up to the challenge. Over 1000 young people were placed in unsubsidized employment, over 2,000 youth were enrolled in work readiness activities and over 4000 participated in some type of employment training activity between October 2000 and March 2001.

Susan (not her real name), a young mother from the Ocala area, was recruited through the assistance of the food stamp rolls. When Susan was contacted, she was working part-time at a convenience store. Her limited income forced her to extend a temporary living situation.

Susan had lost her full-time job and car. Lacking transportation to her part-time job, she rented a room from her boyfriend's family within walking distance to her work. It was originally agreed that she would be able to rent the room for her daughter and herself, but conflicts arose. Susan had to leave her daughter in her mother's care until she could find better living arrangements. She was without her daughter and living on very limited funds.

Susan was offered on-the-job training, she was eager to begin. An appointment was set and she arranged for transportation to the One-Stop Career Center. After completing the eligibility paperwork, Susan was sent on an interview and was hired to start the next week as a full-time secretary. She is now saving for a new car, renting her own home, and she has her daughter back.

Summit to Bring Stakeholders Together to Address Raising Florida's Graduation Rate

The Council set increasing Florida's graduation rate as one of its major focuses for the year and so planned a summit, which was held in November, 2001, to heighten the awareness of the issue, which is a major problem, not only to the young people, but the Florida's economy. The Summit, cosponsored by the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation, drew a large crowd stakeholders to discuss the status, reasons, and possible solutions. The Council and Chamber will continue the discussions at strategy sessions to be held around the state starting in January.

Elevate Employer Involvement in Preparing Youth/First Time Workers for Employment

Increasing employer involvement is a second major focus for council activities. Recognizing the need to educate employers to the value in hiring and retaining young people in the workforce, the

Council co-sponsored a grant with the Better Jobs/Better Wages Council that funded employer awareness programs around the state. These grants are designed to focus attention on the importance of businesses involvement in developing and retaining employees.

A second initiative was developed to involve the business community resulted in an RFP that allowed response only by business or industry groups or associations. This required employers to provide programs to create awareness of demand occupations to at least 1500 young people, job shadowing and internships to at least 1000 young people to result in at least 500 youth getting employment or entering post secondary training for entry into a demand occupation.

Identification and Dissemination of Best Employer Practices in Hiring and Retaining Youth

In an effort to determine what actually is working, the Council sponsored a “Research Institute” at the University of West Florida. The Institute is surveying 10,000 businesses to determine what their attitudes are about hiring youth, successful hiring practices, successful youth development programs, and barriers to successful youth employment. These findings will be shared with business organizations and all regional workforce development boards.

Enhance One-Stop Delivery System to Better Serve Youth

The Council solicited plans from regional workforce boards on how they could better serve youth in their regions. Plans were to include virtual one-stops at remote locations, mentoring, technology links, internships, etc. A grant for “Course Changing” was made available to the 21 regions that submitted creative plans for doing business differently.

Priorities

The Council, working with its partners, identified priorities to be addressed through the agency’s strategic Plan. They are:

- Assuring all populations of youth are served by leveraging funds to maximize impact
- Increasing the number of high school graduates and reduce the dropout rate
- Promoting school internships, entrepreneurial activities and apprenticeships
- Increasing coordination with local one-stops to include all necessary agencies and organizations for successful training and job placement
- Encouraging job placement in targeted industry sectors
- Elevate employer involvement in preparing youth for employment
- Identifying successful youth programs to showcase and promote statewide.

Partners

The First Jobs/First Wages Council partners with other organizations, including:

- ◆ Department of Education
- ◆ Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Department of Children and Families
- ◆ Department of Corrections
- ◆ Florida Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Team Florida
- ◆ Community Action Agencies
- ◆ Economic Development and Business Industry Groups
- ◆ Other public and private non-profits